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ABSTRACT

Issues related to decentralization, with a focus on community involvement, are discussed in this paper. The 20th-century Indonesian experience is analyzed to illustrate the process by which a national administrative reform policy develops, and to identify contributing and inhibiting factors relating to the implementation of decentralization. The Indonesian experience demonstrates the strong impact of historical, cultural, and economic factors on the administrative environment. Decentralization strategies to increase community participation require clarification of roles and responsibilities at the administrative and school levels, provision of training programs, organizational restructuring that provides formal community access mechanisms, and good will. Barriers to decentralization are entrenched attitudes and lack of knowledge and confidence. (8 references) (LMI)

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BY
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Introduction

The matter of community support for education and participation in school management is one that has teased governments of most countries for more than one hundred years. Currently in Australia, for example the Education Acts, enacted over 100 years ago, to provide free, compulsory and secular education have been amended in some states to ensure decentralization through changed organizational structures and definitive community involvement in substantial areas of school management. Industrial agreements between teachers, and the Government ensure teacher participation in significant areas of administration which were formerly the sole task of the school head. In the United Kingdom, the virtue of giving parents a greater voice in the management of schools has been recently proclaimed and legislative steps in that direction taken. Thus many of the responsibilities of Local Education Authorities (LEA) have been devolved to school level. In the USA, where district level community participation has been a feature of educational administration, we read that the huge Chicago school district has arbitrarily devolved major managerial responsibilities directly to schools. The Korean Educational Development Institute was commissioned recently to undertake a study about the

decentralization of educational administration (Chung Chan-young, 1988) and concluded that "the autonomy of the local administrative authorities and schools should be enlarged. Their autonomy should be promoted by democratization of decision-making, professionalization of administrative personnel and rationalization of educational financing." Thus reform of the processes and structures of educational administration including community participation in decision making processes at the school level, is a very live issue in both the so called developed and developing countries. This is the background for exploring some of key concepts, and the importance of historical background, before issues related to the processes of decentralization, with special reference to the involvement of communities in education at the local level are discussed.

First, the key concepts of management, organization, school community, decentralization and participation are explored. Then follows an examination of Indonesia's historical experience during the twentieth century to the present, to demonstrate how a nation's administrative environment develops, and how its management practices come to be shaped and entrenched. Finally, the discussion turns to the elements present in an administrative environment that both foster and inhibit desirable changes toward decentralization which will result in institutionalized participation by communities in significant decision making at the school level.

Key Concepts : A Background Discussion

It is important to begin a paper such as this one which contains concepts open to various interpretations and definitions by establishing some understanding of these concepts as they have informed the writing of the paper. The concepts to be discussed are management, organization, school community, participation and decentralization.

Management

Management is an essential function within all organizations. It ensures that human and material resources are used effectively to achieve the purposes of the organization. It is therefore concerned with the coordination and cooperation necessary for achieving those purposes. Coordination ensures that there is unified action; and cooperation is concerned with productive relationships between individuals.

The essential functions in the process of management are planning, organizing, directing, communicating and controlling. Traditionally the process implies that others do what the manager tells them to do. But this process is incompatible with ideas of participation where managers involve others to ensure that the processes of management are understood, relevant and accomplished. Traditionally management paid little attention to human factors as it mobilized resources and coordinated activities. Now it is realized that all managerial functions involve human beings

whose interactions have a profound effect on the efficient achievement of an organization's purposes. The challenge for managers is to maximize these interactions.

Organization

An organization is a social device for efficiently accomplishing some stated purpose through group means (Katz and Kahn, 1966, p.16). As well as management, it comprises three other elements: purposes, people and coordinated activities.

The nature of the purposes to be achieved distinguishes one organization from another. Thus a school has particular purposes which distinguish it from other organizations, e.g., a hospital. Who are the people who should be involved ensuring that an organization, e.g., a school, achieves its purposes? In broad terms these are administrative officials, the school head, teachers, students, support services personnel (secretaries, cleaning staff etc.), parents, and community.

The School Community

At the level of a school the people who are to be mobilized to achieve organizational goals must include those who are outside the formal structure of the school and its administrative environment. These people comprise the school's community. It is the enhancement of their support for education, and their participation in school management

which is the subject of this seminar. Experience in various countries shows that there is a direct relationship between the level of support communities give their schools, and their participation in meaningful aspects of school management.

Participation

In their useful discussion of participation Hage and Finsterbusch (1987) state that it tends to go together with decentralization. Participation "refers to the inputs of beneficiaries, or the public, into the design, implementation or maintenance of the output of an organization." It has the following advantages:

- tends to improve links with the community, and improve the effectiveness of organizations that provide services to communities;
- can increase resources without increasing costs;
- provides information on local needs and circumstances that improve the design and implementation of programs and projects;
- gives participants some ownership of the program;
- builds the capabilities of participants; and
- results in improved communication through involvement of a variety of persons from the community, and the training leaders in communication skills.

Hage and Finsterbusch (1987) give advice about participation as follows:

- without appropriate training it leads to mobilization, but not always to effectiveness;
- requires effective associations or leadership in the community;
- is effective in generating resources only when there is relative equality in the community, or when there is capable local leadership; and
- requires training to be given to the local leadership.

Decentralization

In many countries processes aimed at decentralizing significant areas of educational management through the various hierarchical levels to the school are taking place. Decentralization refers to the autonomy and power of lower-level participants in an organization. The process of decentralization has been conceptualized as having three stages, namely:

deconcentration - establishment of local offices and the shifting of workload from the central to regional offices of government;

delegation - greater decision making and management authority is given to local government offices;

devolution - local government organizations become autonomous units with full decision making and management authority.

Thus a new administrative environment is being created, changing the former structures which have developed, to a large extent, from the historical roots of the country. Each delegate can therefore reflect upon the patterns of growth and development in his/her educational system from an historical perspective. In this way an understanding can be obtained of the current state of educational management, and the directions in which it might change, so that the school becomes the focus, and has management processes in which the community participates. A brief examination of the Indonesia's historical experience will demonstrate how one country's management practice came to be shaped.

Indonesia: The Twentieth Century Experience

The limited capabilities of countries deemed to be "developing", force them to face continually the dilemma of centralization and decentralization. It is a dilemma between nation building, which requires centralization, and development which requires community participation and supervision.

In a succinct discussion, Ichlasul and Nasikun provide a comprehensive overview as the background for both understanding the dilemma as it relates to Indonesia, and as it is being worked out at the moment.

Early Twentieth Century

The Indonesian nation as it is now known geographically became united under the Dutch colonial government early in the 20th century. Substantial areas outside of Java were governed under a system of indirect rule. These areas were allowed to retain their traditional governmental and trade systems as long as they did not interfere with the trade activities of the colonial government. Thus a form of decentralization in government administration was applied to outlying areas. In these areas, when compared with those under direct rule, a more independent political atmosphere was created, but local expertise in administering the government was limited. The colonial power's intention to develop the system of indirect rule, i.e. the essence of decentralization in the form of a federation, as the foundation for the relationship between central and local administrations, was thwarted by World War II.

Post World War II

After the war, the Dutch attempted to revive this form of governance but momentum for independence created with the historic pronouncement on 17 August 1945 stood in the way. Decentralization and federation became unpopular, being associated with Dutch efforts to reclaim the legitimacy of their administration in Indonesia. It was seen to be a manifestation of the former policy of "divide and rule".

The new central administration viewed efforts to retain, or even encourage decentralization as presenting dangers to the unity of the Indonesian nation. Further the independent Indonesian government did not inherit a decentralized system, but rather the tradition of a centralistic civil service which became rooted in the new Indonesian government bureaucracy. Thus political regulations and administration were arranged in a power system which designated Jakarta as the final arbiter of all policies. The political processes which followed, the economic policy of Indonesianization, and civil service appointments all reinforced the centralization process.

The New Order

During the period of the New Order the political infrastructure that was formed required a centralist system. A limited type of decentralization was commenced, based on UU No. 5, 1974, which provides for widespread and responsible "regional autonomy". In essence administrative decentralization was implemented which provides for the delegation of a portion of the authority for program implementation to the lower levels. No decision making authority and control of revenue sources is involved. Therefore, in practice, the administrative system limited decentralization policies, and gave more opportunities and power to central government organs.

Centralization continued to be reinforced throughout the 1970s as the development budget, depending essentially upon foreign loans and oil export revenues, had to be managed at the top level of government. Development planning was based more upon the consideration of disposal of available funds rather than the demands and needs of the community. The latter however has been addressed by the government through a series of Inpres projects which aim, through decentralizing mechanisms, to balance growth rates between regions and between various levels of society. However the extent to which authority has been decentralized to regional governments to execute development programs has been restricted by the centralistic planning and budget system.

Beginnings of Decentralization

These Inpres projects have provided both the central and regional governments with experiences in the problems which arise in a more meaningful decentralization policy framework ard effort. The experience provides some evidence that the greater the scope for articulation of regional interests in the project, the greater the motivation for the region to carry out the development program. The Inpres projects have also been successful in developing the capabilities of regional government institutions.

The experience of attempting to decentralize in the limited manner discussed has revealed the communication gap which occurs between the centre, and the area targetted for development. Central personnel are hampered because they do not understand thoroughly problems in the targetted area. Planning and implementing projects appropriate to community needs becomes difficult with community support and participation being difficult to obtain. The conclusion to be reached is that the overall success of regional development programs as instruments of policy and decentralization efforts will be achieved only when the regional governments are given greater freedom to manage increasingly larger development budgets. In the Inpres programs the regions have demonstrated their capacity to manage a relatively small component of the regional budget based upon considerations and priorities of the region. They are now ready to accept greater delegated responsibilities.

Towards the Future

The above conclusion can be extrapolated to include lower levels of organizational development. A recent report by the Bureau of Planning of the Secretariat General to the MOEC, Indonesia (STEPPES, 1989) on factors which influence the quality of education in SMP and SMA schools throughout the archipelago emphasized the importance of coooperative

working relationships between school, parents and community, and the level of attention paid to the school by the parents and community. These factors were reported to have a positive effect on the motivation of students, the smooth conduct of the teaching-learning process, the general level of support given to the schools, and the readiness of parents to pay locally determined school fees. Therefore, at the school level, it might be predicted, and indeed evidence from education systems in other countries suggests, that community support for, and interest in schools is increased to the extent that formal mechanisms exist for their involvement and participation in relevant areas of school-level decision making.

In Indonesia the basic laws concerning the national system of education (1989) require centralized regulation, yet with educational activities being carried out in a decentralized manner as the joint responsibility of the family, the community and the government. What must be determined however is how to operationalize this joint responsibility, and what are the various levels of involvement, e.g., advice only, participation equally, or final say in the particular areas of decision making to be delegated.

Present Status: Ministry of Education and Culture

Within the MOEC concerted efforts have been made to enhance bottom-up planning processes, a government-wide aspiration instituted in 1982. Thus the provincial and district offices of the Bureau of Planning are involved in data collecting, organizing and interpreting. Top administrators are taking a direct role in this significant change, not only as ratifiers, but most importantly as problem solvers. The resulting problem identification and priority setting by local offices assists decision making at higher levels. The ability of the offices to function in this way, following the implementation of training programs for the personnel concerned, is a clear indication that the process of decentralization has commenced.

Clearly, within the MOEC, deconcentration is well advanced, the central structure being duplicated at provincial and district levels. The matter of delegation becomes the next critical issue to be addressed. The appropriate balance between control and the responsiveness to be developed within a more open system will be a challenge, particularly as it relates to the appropriate decision making and management roles at the provincial, district and school levels and especially as the national laws of the education system (1989) see the community as a partner in implementing national education influenced by local special characteristics in accordance with central policy.

Community Participation in School Management : Creating the Administrative Environment

The Indonesian experience clearly shows that history, culture and economic imperatives are strongly influential in creating the administrative environment in which the organs of government function. National Laws and Acts of Parliament are enacted, not only to regulate that environment, but to enshrine a nation's aspirations as expressed at various times by the will of the people. The creation of a new administrative environment is required to establish a new, dynamic balance between the dominant administrative mode of centralization and the desired goal of decentralization as the processes of the latter are implemented.

Why Decentralize

What are the factors which motivate policy makers to implement procedures for decentralization, which ultimately require the involvement of communities, either directly or by representation, in decision making responsibilities related to designated matters? Firstly, it is believed that development activities will be accepted, supported, and owned if the beneficiaries are involved in the related decision making processes. Secondly democratic processes require the involvement and participation of communities in decision making so that outcomes are understood and agreed. Thirdly, the burdens of development are often such that local assistance and involvement means the difference

between full or partial implementation of necessary projects for which government can provide limited assistance only (Bernard, 1988).

The extent to which decentralization is implemented must be carefully considered because commonsense tells that successful decentralization depends upon centralization in some parts of an organization, e.g., financial controls, information gathering systems, transfer and promotion policies. Full decentralization could lead to the following (Murphy, 1989):

- fragmentation of the system;
- loss of the ability to coordinate actions in pursuit of common goals;
- uneven performance of schools with strong schools thriving, and weak schools languishing;
- parochial interests becoming dominant; and
- disparities increasing between school resources, teacher quality and student outcomes.

Therefore a successful balance between centralization and decentralization provides for local administrative autonomy within the pursuit of unified goals. Each level must understand its responsibilities, limitations and prerogatives. There will be a redeployment of managerial resources and a reallocation of human resources. As Chung (1988) states in the KEDI report which mainly addresses

decentralization of administrative processes:

> The autonomy of school leadership under the democratic leadership of (the) principal does not necessarily negate the continuum of hierarchical levels ... (it) is based on adherence to the existing order, and creative response to calls for the delegation of authority to lower levels ... it also attaches importance to the school's relation with parents, regional communities and interest groups ...

The central office provides more services, such as facilitators and coordinators. Economies of scale dictate the nature of these services. Central managers remain responsible for institutionalizing values. They can do this by influencing the selection of managerial personnel who share the core beliefs and values of the system.

Participation in Perspective

The underpinning rationale for participation is that the beneficiaries of administrative actions are involved, to the greatest extent possible, in the decision making and its implementation. It must also be recognized that the push for decentralization which results in participatory processes almost inevitably stems from above; it is rarely the result of any grass roots movement. This fact has important implications for the processes related to

delegation and participation.

What are some of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of participation ? Bernard (1988) suggests the following:

Advantages

1. Participation helps ensure programs are responsive to the real needs of clients, which may or may not be correctly interpreted by program planners;
2. Participation contributes to maintaining a program's relevance throughout its implementation;
3. Participation supports the efficiency of a program by helping to identify whether planned implementation strategies and techniques are practical and likely to succeed;
4. Real participation builds commitment to a program among beneficiaries which greatly increases its chances of success.

Disadvantages

1. Participation loosens the control of central authorities over program activities making accountability more of a problem;
2. Participation makes decision making more time consuming which slows down planning and implementation;
3. Participation can develop inequities in implementation of a program across a variety of social settings. The level

of participation, especially money and material, is almost ways higher in more affluent communities.

4. Participation can challenge and/or fall victim to vested interests that can undermine, control, or reorient activities to their own interests.

One vital aspect of participation which must be considered concerns the matters that can be delegated, and how these should be phased. Phasing is necessary because it reflects the level of experience and readiness of a school and its community, through a representative body, to establish participatory processes. Thus a careful and well defined choice of initial responsibilities is imperative. Each participant in this seminar will have his/her own ideas about what is possible.

The managerial areas of responsibility which could be considered for community participation include:

1. Budget and finance: coordinating the budgetary inputs from government and parental sources; establishing a forward budget based upon guidelines and school based priorities; deciding how additional financial needs can be raised; making submissions based on needs for additional funds; and implementing accounting procedures.
2. Additional buildings, buildings maintenance, maintenance and improvement of grounds: making submissions for

grants; raising funds within the school's budget plan; arranging local management efforts to maintain and improve grounds and buildings; and after hours use of the buildings.

3. Facilities, equipment, supplies : establishing needs and school budget priority; and requisitioning, monitoring and supplementing supplies.
4. Personnel : monitoring pupil attendance; encouraging teacher punctuality; supporting the head of school in matters of discipline of both staff and students; and assisting with the appointment of non-teaching staff.

However, an important factor in the motivation of communities is that the delegated responsibilities must be meaningful, carrying with them real decision making authority. This is usually involved with resources, and some element of finance and budgeting. It is an easy matter for a community to assist with the maintenance of a school and its surroundings by the provision of voluntary labour, but when it comes to a responsibility which requires establishing priorities for activities which are thought by the community to be important in the improvement of educational quality, especially if the allocation of, and contribution to resources are included, then a true sense of the value of their contribution is provided to those who participate. "The greater the dependence on the central government in financing local education, the longer it takes

to realize autonomy" (Chung, 1988).

Attitudes to Decentralization

The fear of managers, whether they be the school head, or administrators of the system, is that those who participate in the decision making processes are now enjoying a share of the power, for there must be no mistake: participatory processes require a redistribution of power between the centre, intervening levels and schools, and between schools and community. Perhaps these new participants will show an unwanted interest in other related matters traditionally the domain of educational managers. Thus a clear statement of what matters are to be decided by participatory processes must be made. Further decisions must be taken as to the extent of participation in those matters.

Well established attitudes of bureaucrats, school personnel and communities, resulting from long experience in a centralized system, must be identified and overcome. Chung (1988) contends that uniformity and rigidity are the hallmarks of a centralized system of educational administration. Problems to be overcome if autonomy is to be given to local administrative authorities and schools include the centralized distribution of power, so that local authorities and schools feature a heavy reliance on higher

authorities; the doubtful levels of professionality of education administrative personnel, who are always dependent upon higher authorities; the top down orders and auditing requirements of administrative authorities, which emphasize quantifiable accomplishments, not goals related to the substance of education; and parents and regional communities who, lacking an understanding of education, bring pressure and intervention making unnecessary difficulties for teachers. Operational guidelines must be written which will ensure that any new regulatory intention is implemented. Two way communication processes must be opened up, information sessions instituted, and complementary inservice education mandated.

Mechanisms for Participation

Mechanisms for participation, appropriate to the socio-cultural-political environment in which the school system functions, need to be established. In Indonesia for example there is a tradition of *gotong-royong*, or community participation in special activities. Another tradition, *musyawarah*, or consensus decision making is well established and is entirely compatible with participatory processes. Perhaps the community bodies already associated with schools can be formalized with elected and appointed members, and specified duties.

Much of the participatory approach is new to the

administrative levels of the system, the school and the community. It is imperative therefore that training strategies be devised to help all people involved to understand the new challenges, to promote community interest, and to effect changes in personal attitudes.

Structural changes to ensure the maximum of cooperation and two-way communication flow will be required, because the mechanism for transfer of operational responsibility implied in the decentralizing processes operates within a structure. The extent to which current structures can be modified, incorporated, or developed becomes an important question. Therefore, the revised responsibilities at the various hierarchical levels must be defined, e.g., centre, region, district, school. Chung (1988), relating the Korean experience writes of local administrative bodies which are responsible for the administration of matters pertaining to elementary and secondary education which reflect the local needs of education. "They lay out a regional plan of educational development, intake a broad base of opinions, and make informed decisions based on the opinions. Administrative support and supervisory guidance are the major responsibilities."

Job descriptions must be written, or redefined for the administrative personnel at the various levels, and formal mechanisms for participation established. The role of the head of the school is one which is especially important for

this person must ensure that: the policy requirements of the Ministry are known and understood by the community; community aspirations which are articulated through the participatory mechanisms are integrated into the school's day to day activities; open channels for two way communication are established between school and community, school-community and the administration of the Ministry; and members of the community who become part of the mechanism for participation feel at ease in their new relationship with the educational structure, and are kept fully informed of developments, information needs, activities, and other requirements of the formal system.

Whatever the structure, it should reflect the aspirations, traditions and geography of the area. For example, various systems of school clusters have been suggested as a means of maximizing the use of the human and material resources available to schools in a particular area while mobilizing community support and participation. Clearly however clustering of schools which are geographically remote from each other, e.g., situated on small islands, would not be administratively efficient, or satisfying to the community.

Decentralization: Cautionary Notes

If the policy climate in a country is conducive to further exploration of the process of decentralization,

especially community participation in school management, then the old adage, "Hasten slowly!" should be the watchword. To this end pilot projects would provide the opportunity to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate a strategy or strategies. Feedback gained in problems and weaknesses would enable corrective measures to be incorporated in policy. System-wide changes would then be introduced with greater confidence. In the execution of the strategy the cautionary notes provided by Bray and Lillis (1988) should be heeded, namely:

1. Quality of schooling can suffer if the proper mix of local and government support is not maintained. Thus a strategy which sought to implement the decentralization process to the devolution stage, i.e. full autonomy for decision making and management authority, would be inappropriate.
2. Implementation plans should not underestimate costs, or the necessity for expert support and advice. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation procedures should be built in to the pilot project.
3. Simple and precise accounting procedures must be established to ensure financial accountability of the pilot project.
4. Practical controls and oversighting which do not stifle community initiative must be an integral part of the pilot project.

Conclusion

In this paper key concepts important to understanding what is meant by community support for education and participation in school management were explored; the importance of acknowledging the historical context, and the current climate of administrative procedures as influences on directions any proposed changes will take were described; and the creation of an administrative environment conducive to community participation in school management was discussed.

From the latter it is clear that progress from centralization along the path to decentralization must be carefully phased so that a dynamic balance always exists between the two. Increasing levels of local administrative autonomy will be delegated within guidelines provided by central policy makers. Procedures adopted to encourage and ensure wider participation of all concerned parties at the various administrative levels down to the schools will require clarification of new roles and responsibilities at each administrative level, retraining and redeployment of personnel, and careful restructuring of the organization. At the school level it will be especially important to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of heads of schools, and the mechanisms established for community participation; and to provide information and training programs to assist with attracting parent and community members.

The push for decentralization inevitably begins from the central office. In implementation, constraints will need to be

overcome, namely, the well established attitudes of bureaucrats, school personnel and communities; and the lack of knowledge and confidence of both professional and community personnel regarding the new expectations.

Good will is one important ingredient in the success of the decentralization process, which results ultimately in the sharing of power by the community as it participates in the making of important decisions related to the quality of education provided in its school. As the process develops and accelerates, those persons involved in it will become more competent in establishing what they want to accomplish, building their own expertise and confidence, especially if they are challenged to make decisions about significant matters related to improved education for their children.

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